

Palm Sunday – The Triumphal Entry: Mark chapter 11, verses 1 – 11

We begin with the quote at the end of last week's study - ***"Here is your King!"***

The prophecy in Zechariah chapter 9, verse 9 puts it in context. *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on an ass, on a colt the foal of an ass."*

The Context:- It is worth spending a few minutes reading the different accounts in the four Gospels; Matthew 21, verses 1–11; Mark 11, verses 1–11; Luke 19, verses 28–44 and John 12, verses 12 –19. Combining the information in the Gospels, it is most likely that Jesus arrived in Bethany, at the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, on the Friday evening – John chapter 12, verses 1 – 2. The supper mentioned here in John's Gospel would have been the Sabbath evening meal. The Sabbath Day itself would be spent in Bethany with the entry into Jerusalem taking place on the Sunday after the Saturday Sabbath rest.

Note that from this point on Jesus abandoned the cautious attitude which had caused him to withdraw from areas of tension and possible crisis (Mark 8, verse 30; John 10, verses 39 - 40 and John 11, verses 53 – 54). In his deliberate fulfilment of the prophecy he openly challenged the Jewish leaders. In the entry into Jerusalem he provoked disapproval and opposition.

Mark 11, verses 1 – 7:- Jesus had left Bethany and come to the foot of the Mount of Olives. The village of Bethphage was opposite them on the slope (verse 2). I have no problem reconciling Matthew's account of there being *"an ass tied and a colt with her"* with that of Mark and Luke. If the colt was not broken in (*"on which no one has ever sat"* – verse 2) then the sensible thing to do would be to lead the mother and the colt would follow! The Greek version of Zechariah 9, verse 9 which was in common usage at the time of Jesus, is even more explicit it states *" . . . riding on a new colt the foal of an ass"*. That the colt was docile enough to be ridden is another "nature miracle" showing the Lord's authority over creation.

Mark 11, verses 8 – 10:- The Gospel of John, chapter 12, verse 12 says *"a great crowd . . . heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. So they . . . went out to meet him"*. Those who were cheering him were not just his disciples and followers but many who had heard of the raising of Lazarus also joined them (John 12, verses 17 – 19). The spreading of garments and herbs before a king or great person was a widespread custom. (See 2 Kings, chapter 9, verse 13 for an example.) The acclamations used in these verses in Mark come from the Psalms, especially from Psalm 118, verse 26. The word *"Hosanna"* is properly a cry for help addressed to God or the King, meaning "save now" - see 2 Samuel 14, verse 4 and 2 Kings 6, verse 26. The expectation on the part of many seems to be that here was the Messiah, coming to Jerusalem to inaugurate the Kingdom of God.

Again the words - ***"Here is your King!"*** are appropriate! The victory and triumph were yet to come!

*My song is love unknown,
my Saviour's love to me,
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be.
O who am I
that for my sake
my Lord should take
frail flesh and die?*

*He came from his blest throne
salvation to bestow,
but men made strange, and none
the longed-for Christ would know.
But O my friend,
my friend indeed,
who at my need,
his life did spend.*

*Sometimes they strew his way,
and his strong praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their King.
Then "Crucify!"
is all their breath,
and for his death
they thirst and cry.*

Samuel Crossman 1664